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JOHN AND SARAH BRADBURY COONS  
AND THEIR DESCENDANTS

INCLUDING

Remarks and Observations on the  
Wisconsin Lead Region  
of their time



By M. K. Hobbs





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GEORGE I. HAIGHT  
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MERVILLE K. HOBBS  
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CENTRAL 7577

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WARD ROSS  
EDWARD A. HAIGHT  
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CHARLES H. LERCH  
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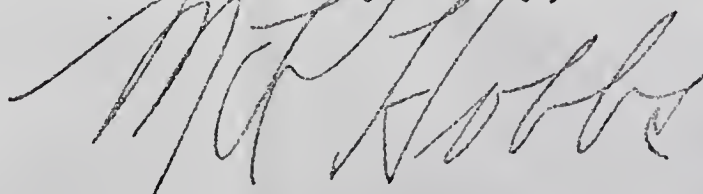
May 25, 1939

The Newberry Library,  
60 West Walton Place,  
Chicago, Illinois.

Gentlemen:

It has been suggested to me that possibly you  
would be interested in having the enclosed booklet in  
your files. There is no particular originality involved  
although the maps are unique.

Yours very truly,



MKH:FS

Enclosure

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## FOREWORD.

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This short book has been prepared for two primary purposes: first, to gather together and to record in one place an account of the lives of those sturdy, courageous pioneers, John R. Coons and his wife, Sarah Bradbury; and second, to promote in my niece, Miriam Runkel, an interest in the historical lore of southwestern Wisconsin. That John and Sarah are her ancestors may create a personal interest sufficient to overcome the deficiencies of the penman.

John and Sarah lie buried in a forgotten village. The moss has filled the lines which tell upon their tombstone their names and dates. The lives of those who fought to wrest their home from the Indians and who pioneered in the settlement of Gratiot's Grove, Dubuque, Belmont, and Potosi should be recorded and remembered,—if only by their descendants.

To Aunt Eva Calloley, the oldest living descendant of John and Sarah; to Cora Coons, wife of J. B. Coons (Beck); to Mae Coons, wife of J. H. Coons (Henry); and to May Coons, wife of H. E. Coons (Gene) appreciation is expressed for their help in gathering and supplying information.

To the author the preparation of this book has been an unmeasured pleasure. May it please to some degree those of the living generations who read it.

M. K. HOBBS.



## CHAPTER I.

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### GENESIS AND EXODUS.

#### THE COONS FAMILY IN EUROPE.

The name Coons is of German origin. It signifies "bold" or "daring". Many forms of the name are found in European records, among which are Kuntz, Kuhns, Koens, Cuntz, Coens, Kuhn, Coon, and Countz. The name occurs most frequently in the Rhenish provinces; but is found also among the records of Prussia, Bavaria, and Austria.

The family which is believed to have furnished the first American progenitor lived in 1714 in Musen, a village in Nassau, part of the then German Palatinate. In the year 1900 the name of Coons was still common in the district.

Definite records of emigration to America disclose settlement at an early date by members of the various Coons families of Germany. John Christopher Kuhn was settled in Berks County, Pennsylvania, in 1733. Philip Kuhns was living in Albany, New York, in 1721. Jacob Cuntz arrived in Philadelphia in 1736. His brothers Nicholas and Heinrich came to Pennsylvania in 1742 and 1744 respectively.

It is the Coons family in Musen which is believed to have first settled in America, coming to Virginia. This emigration is discussed in the succeeding section.

#### AMERICAN ORIGIN.

Prior to 1714 Governor Spotswood of Virginia learned of iron ore deposits in northern Virginia. There were, however, no miners in Virginia. The Governor therefore sought the aid of Baron de Graffenreid, known to the Governor to have come from the iron-mining region of Ger-





many. The Baron had recently come to Virginia from the Carolinas, whence he had fled from the Indians.

From the village of Musen in Nassau and from the village of Siegen in Westphalia, Baron de Graffenreid secured the emigration of twelve families. One of these twelve families was headed by Jacob Coons, sometimes written Countz.

In 1714 the twelve families, together with their own pastor, Henry Haeger, arrived at Virginia. There was some delay over disembarking because of an argument with the ship's captain over the fare; but the Governor compromised the difficulty, and the families landed. Settlement was established on the upper waters of the Rappahannock; and eventually Germantown was established.

One of the early marriages solemnized was that of Joseph Hitt, a son of one of the twelve families, in 1724 to Mary Coons, a daughter of Jacob Coons.

Each of these families was of the German Protestant faith. Later there was dissension between the Lutherans and the Reformed Lutherans.

The records of the family established in Virginia in 1714 by Jacob Coons are unfortunately incomplete to a large degree. The antecedent records were destroyed in the burning of the village church in Musen. Later records were destroyed in the Culpeper Court House during the Civil War.

For the Revolutionary War the Coons family of Virginia furnished several soldiers. For the cause of the Confederacy, among those of the Coons family were Sergeant Geo. D. Coons and G. H. Coons. Both were enrolled in Virginia Cavalry, Stuart's Brigade. G. H. Coons was killed in battle.

The wife of the first American Coons, Jacob, was Kath-



rena. They had issue, Mary and Joseph. The latter was the father of a son named Henry, who in the latter part of the eighteenth century married Mary Ann Allen by whom he was the father of Susan, Martin, and others.

THE RELATION OF JOHN R. COONS TO THE COONS FAMILY OF  
CULPEPER COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

An effort has been made to establish definitely that John R. Coons, who was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1800, was the son of the Henry Coons last named and Mary Ann Allen. The records have not been found.\* That John R. Coons was such son seems the probability, however; and for the following reasons:

1. The migration to Tennessee and Kentucky was largely from Virginia. The treaty of 1783 concluding the Revolutionary War and the defeat of the Indians by General Anthony Wayne in 1794 had by this time removed to a large extent the antagonistic influence which England exerted against the colonies among the Indians of Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. The settlement of these regions by pioneers from Virginia proceeded rapidly after Wayne's victory.

2. The book, "Notes on Culpeper County", written by R. T. Green, and published in Culpeper in 1900, and from which much of the foregoing information is derived, mentions frequently the migration of families and newly married couples to either Tennessee or Kentucky from Virginia.

3. Henry Coons and Mary Ann Allen were married in the latter seventeen hundreds. That they had children is known; but not the names of all of them. John R. Coons was born at a time, 1800, to have made it possible, and

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\* The Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Commerce, reports that there are no birth records in existence for the City of Lexington at that early date.







under the other circumstances shown, probable, that he was the son of Henry and Mary Ann.

4. The recurrence of the names Henry (in the next generation), Susan, and Mary or Marie (in succeeding generations) is further evidence.

5. It may be mentioned also that Jacob Coons was a miner; that John R. Coons was a miner; that Henry and Samuel of the next generation were miners; and that descendants of Henry and Samuel have been engaged in or educated for that industry.

It is concluded, therefore, that John R. Coons, with whom this narrative really begins, was the son of Henry Coons and Mary Ann Allen and a descendant of Jacob Coons who came to Virginia in 1714.



## CHAPTER II.

## JOHN BRADBURY.

## THE RELATION OF JOHN BRADBURY TO THE COONS FAMILY.

In respect to two collateral persons this narrative departs at some length from the direct Coons line. One of these persons is John Bradbury, whose daughter, Sarah, married John R. Coons.\* John Bradbury was a botanist; and paradoxical as it may seem, his journal of travels is one of the source books of American history.

## BRADBURY'S "TRAVELS."

Bradbury's journals were first published in England in 1817. A second edition appeared in London in 1819. Reuben Gold Thwaites, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, in 1904 republished Bradbury's journals as Volume V of a

"Series of Annotated Reprints of some of the best and rarest contemporary volumes of travel, descriptive of the Aborigines and the Social and Economic Conditions in the Middle and Far West, during the period of Early American Settlement."

The series is entitled "Early Western Travels, 1748-1846." Volume V is entitled "Bradbury's Travels in the Interior of America, 1809-1811."\*\* Any of this series of books can be found in the larger public libraries, in most historical libraries, and in many smaller libraries in the Middle West.

\* There is some belief in the Coons family that John R. Coons married the sister of John Bradbury. Washington Irving, "Astoria," page 204, recites that Bradbury was a man of mature age in 1811. Sarah Bradbury, who was born in 1800, and hence then was only 11 years of age, seems ruled out as a sister.

\*\* An original edition of "Travels" in the original binding is possessed by the writer. The original price, 8shil. 6d, is still legible. This valued book was purchased from Wright Howse, dealer in Americana, at 1142 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago. He has available a rebound first edition. The Thwaites edition may be picked up from time to time for from \$7.50 to \$10.00.





## BRADBURY'S LIFE AND JOURNEYS.

Comparatively little is known of the life of John Bradbury, naturalist and traveler, beyond what is disclosed in his journals. He was a Scotchman by birth; but had long lived in England when, in 1809, he was commissioned by the Botanical Society of Liverpool to make researches into plant life in the United States. He arrived with a letter of introduction to President Jefferson, and was invited to visit at Monticello, where he remained ten days. The President gave him a letter of introduction to General Meriwether Lewis, Governor of Louisiana Territory at St. Louis. In this letter of August 16, 1809, President Jefferson said:

“I have the opportunity of knowing that besides being a botanist of the first order, he is a man of entire worth & correct conduct. as such I recommend him to your notice, advice & patronage. \* \* \*”

On the last day of December, 1809 Bradbury arrived at the frontier town of St. Louis. The spring and summer of 1810 were spent in short excursions from St. Louis. Living specimens of the flora of that vicinity were sent to Liverpool by way of New Orleans. In the fall of 1810 Bradbury learned that the American Fur Company was sending an expedition up the Missouri River and thence overland to Astoria on the west coast. He applied to Wilson P. Hunt, chief agent of John Jacob Astor, for passage, which was accorded him.

The transcontinental journey of Lewis and Clark in 1804-1806 had gone up the Missouri. Since this exploration there had been no observations in the newly-purchased Louisiana Territory, except the casual ones of hunters and trappers.

Washington Irving, who in “Astoria” recounted the history of the Astorian expedition, states:

“Among the various persons who were about to pro-





ceed up the Missouri with Mr. Hunt, were two scientific gentlemen: one Mr. John Bradbury, a man of mature age, but great enterprise and personal activity, who had been sent out by the Linnean Society of Liverpool to make a collection of American plants; the other, a Mr. Nuttall, likewise an Englishman, younger in years, who has since made himself known as the author of \* \* \* 'Genera of American Plants'." ("Astoria", p. 204.)

Another companion on the voyage was Henry Marie Brackenridge, who later became United States District Judge in Florida.

The journey of the Astorian expedition began from St. Louis on March 12, 1811. The trip up the river was accomplished in three boats: a 30 or 40 foot birch canoe; capable of carrying a four ton load, yet light enough to be carried on men's shoulders; a larger barge; and a keel boat. Canadian boatmen pulled the oars. Dorion, a half-breed Sioux, was engaged as interpreter.

The Missouri was ascended beyond its juncture with the Knife River in North Dakota. On July 17 Bradbury left his friends, who had exchanged their boats with a party of traders from the Missouri Fur Company for the horses of the latter, and returned to St. Louis with the Missouri Company traders. The eighteen hundred mile trip down river was accomplished in less than two weeks.

The sequel to the hardships of the Missouri River expedition of Bradbury was an attack of fever lasting four months. Bradbury then embarked for New Orleans. After a perilous voyage of ten days, New Madrid was reached on December 14, 1811. Here an earthquake nearly destroyed an island on which encampment had been made. The town was destroyed. On January 13, 1812 New Orleans was reached; and on the 20th Bradbury and his friend Brackenridge set sail for New York.





Before completing preparations for the trip to England, the War of 1812 broke out. For some time Bradbury remained in New York. There he improved his time by making the acquaintance of Governor DeWitt Clinton, and acquiring honorary membership in the Literary and Philosophical Society of New York. Before the treaty of peace, Bradbury had crossed the Alleghanies and traveled in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, and Illinois. These territories are described in an appendix to his "Travels".

Bradbury was in England when his account was first published in 1817. Shortly after the publication, Bradbury returned to America and in 1819 was permanently residing in St. Louis.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF BRADBURY'S JOURNALS.

Bradbury was a well-selected agent of the Botanical Society of Liverpool. In natural history he was a trained observer. He portrayed the Indian as he found him. He gave accurate descriptions of the habitations, weapons, ceremonies, tribal affinities and hostilities of the aborigines. His enthusiasm was not shaken by danger from hostile Indians, fatigue, and even hunger. Roast dog was not a stranger to his palate. His calmness secured his party's safety during the earthquake on the Mississippi. During a tornado on the Missouri he was collected enough to note the species of shrub to which the boat was moored, and upon whose rooted tenacity the lives of all depended.

This was the character of man to whom Washington Irving acknowledged his indebtedness for information for the book, "Astoria". Of Bradbury, Thwaites says:

"Next to Lewis and Clark's journals we have no better ethnological authority for the Western Indians of this period, than Bradbury."





From the time of the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1804-1806, no description of the Missouri Valley had been given to the world. Bradbury's account was so favorably received that a second edition was necessary within two years; and he was even accused in England of a design to encourage emigration to America.

#### GLEANINGS FROM BRADBURY'S JOURNAL.

By all who are interested in a vivid account of a journey beyond the pale of American settlement, Bradbury's "Travels in the Interior of America" should be read. The book is over three hundred pages in length. But little of it can be abstracted here. That which is repeated is not of historical importance. Rather it is of personal interest to those who have heard from generation to generation some of the tales recited in the book:

March 12, 1811—The start from St. Louis, Bradbury waiting until the last minute for mail from home, saying, "I must here observe, that the post to St. Louis is dispatched from Louisville, in Kentucky, a distance of more than 300 miles, through a wilderness".

March 17—Met Daniel Boone, then eighty-four years of age, coming to St. Louis with his spring catch of sixty beaver skins.

April 1—Shot a skunk not knowing what it was. The boatmen considered its meat a delicacy.

April 7—Pursued by a bear.

April 10—Observed a scalp dance of the Osage Indians.

April 18—First saw passenger pigeons. In a few hours shot 271 of them for food.

April 19—Nearly bitten by a rattlesnake.

April 28—Reached the Platt River.



May 14—Learned that the Sioux were assembling to stop the journey. Thereafter great precautions were taken.

May 23—Bradbury was captured by the Ponca Indians. He amused them with his pocket compass, and escaped.\*

May 31—Attack by 600 Sioux, who perceiving that the party was armed with swivel howitzers, asked for a truce, smoked the peace pipe, accepted a bribe of tobacco, and allowed the travelers to proceed.

June 8—Passed the Cheyenne River.

June 12—Ate sweet corn for the first time. Found it very palatable.

June 14—A Ponca brave desired Bradbury to marry his sister.

June 15—Indian dogs purchased, shot, and cooked for breakfast.

June 19—Excursion on horse back to the Mandan tribe.

June 22—Saw seventeen herds of buffalo, estimating their number at over 10,000.

June 28—On crossing the Knife River in a canoe, Bradbury was splashed by Indian girl swimmers, and retaliated by rowing to shore and seizing their clothes, much to the amusement of the onlookers.

July 7—The boatmen, being unable to take their trunks overland to Astoria, sold seventeen of them to Bradbury for his specimens of plant life.

July 17—Started return trip with party of Missouri Fur Company, his up-river companions continuing overland to Astoria.

July 20—Encountered a tornado. Bradbury records that the boat was moored to a false indigo shrub.

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\* This compass for many years was in the possession of J. Henry Coons of Potosi.





July 29—Arrived back at St. Louis on Sunday.

July 30—Called at the post-office early to find letters telling of the welfare of his family. Transplanted his living specimens of plants on land bought at \$1.65 cents an acre.\*

In an appendix to the journal proper, Bradbury gives advice to travelers, particularly immigrants. One paragraph is still good advice, it is hoped, even after the lapse of more than a century. It reads:

“In traveling this man ought not to be sparing of his enquiries; he is not in the least danger of receiving a rude or uncivil answer, even if he should address himself to a *squire*, (so justices are called.) It is expected in America that every man shall attend to his own concerns; and if a man who is out of work ask for employment, it is considered as a very natural thing.”

Prices of the times in the Western Country (Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois) are interesting. Examples follow:

Flour, per barrel.....	\$4.00
Potatoes, per bushel.....	.31
Beef, per lb.....	.05
Bacon, per do.....	.08
Fowls, each.....	.12½
Turkeys, do.....	.75
Butter, per lb.....	.14
Whiskey, per gallon.....	.40

Wages per day given in food purchasing power are:

“An ordinary workman can procure for a day’s work, fifty pounds of flour,—or twenty pounds of beef,—or three bushels of potatoes,— \* \* \* one very large turkey.”

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\* Neither Thwaites nor Bradbury makes it clear how the latter’s plant collection reached England. Presumably Bradbury sent it from New York before he was himself ready to depart. In any event it reached England, and was inspected and described by a man named Purse.





## CHAPTER III.

## MAJOR JOHN R. COONS.

## THE MEASURE OF THE MAN.

In the "History of Grant County", published by the Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1881, under the title

"Some of Grant County's Illustrious Dead"

appears a sketch of the life of Major John R. Coons. The article is written by J. W. Seaton, who came to Potosi, Wisconsin, in 1847; and who was a contemporary of Major Coons. To the contents of this article, written April 16, 1879 and published in a series entitled "Sketches of the Mines," the Coons family is deeply indebted for extant information concerning this illustrious ancestor.

Of Major Coons, Seaton wrote in the article referred to:

"Major John R. Coons \* \* \* derived his patent of nobility from the hand of nature. He hailed from the 'Blue Grass' state. \* \* \* His gentlemanly bearing—his pleasing conversation—his generous nature and abiding friendship—bespoke the true Kentuckian—and the truer man \* \* \* he became an adept in penmanship, a good calculator, and stored his mind with useful reading."

The French language Major Coons spoke with the "glibness and familiarity of his mother tongue."

He was no common adventurer, but a true pioneer. He had a strong constitution and a will to encounter and overcome all difficulties.

## THE LIFE OF JOHN R. COONS.

John R. Coons was born June 24, 1800 in Lexington, Kentucky. He is believed to have been the son of Henry Coons (Joseph, Jacob,—see chapter 1) and Mary Ann Allen. He had a sister, Susan; and brothers, Martin and William.





At the time of his birth Kentucky had been a member of the Union for eight years, and was a thriving and growing commonwealth. The victorious march of General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, with his United States regulars and Kentucky volunteers from Cincinnati to Lake Erie, culminating in the Indian's last stand at Fallen Timbers, August 20, 1794, put to an end forty years of warfare against the Northwest Indians. The treaty of Greenville in 1795, following this victory, brought security and quiet for fifteen years.

It was during this period that Major Coons, still a child of tender years, came to St. Louis in 1803. St. Louis, as part of the Territory of Louisiana, had been recently acquired by Jefferson's purchase. It was a small French village. Traders, trappers, hunters, and Creole girls constituted the bulk of the inhabitants. The village was then becoming one of the principal fur markets of the United States. The American Fur Company established itself at this strategic point of water communication via the Mississippi and Missouri with a vast hinterland. Of this firm the Major became a trusted employee.

On New Year's Eve in 1810 there also arrived in St. Louis, John Bradbury, destined to be the father-in-law of ten year old John. Bradbury had left in England a family, which he mentions frequently in his "Travels". Among the family were a son, old enough to correspond with his father on money matters; and a daughter, born in Macclesfield, England, November 25, 1800. After the War of 1812, Bradbury returned to England, published his book, and in 1819 was a permanent resident with his family in St. Louis.

Within two years John Coons and Sarah Bradbury were married. The marriage took place on August 30, 1821. Bradbury was a man of distinction and importance. He was a friend of the Governor; of the deputy attorney-general,





Brackenridge; of Wilson P. Hunt, the first postmaster of St. Louis, and a resident partner of the American Fur Company; and of Albert Gallatin. To court and win the daughter of such a man, young John was either of equal standing or a man "to overcome all difficulties", as he is described by Seaton.

To this union were born ten children.\* Of seven of them, nothing is known, save that two were unnamed and probably died in infancy. The record of the births appears in Sarah Bradbury's Bible. Each of the unnamed children was one of two pair of twins, born twelve years apart.

The flyleaves of Sarah's Bible disclose the following:

"Sarah B. Coons.

John R. Coons & Sarah Bradbury was married August 30th, 1821.

John B. Coons & Sister was born August 28th, 1822.

John Wm. Coons was born August 21st, 1824.

Elizabeth Coons was born March 11th, 1826.

Henry B. Coons was born January 30th, 1829.

Samuel Berry Coons was born March 19th, 1831.

Sarah Coons was born July 10th, 1833.

Marie Louisa & Brother was born July 12th, 1834.

Eliza Coons was born January 16th, 1836.

John R. Coons born June 24, 1800, Lexington, Ky.

Died July 25, 1852.

Sarah Bradbury born November 25, 1800.

Macclesfield England.

Died March 18, 1851."

Four children had been born when, in 1827, the father was sent to the Upper Lead Mines, as the Wisconsin lead region was called to distinguish from the Missouri lead mines, and assigned a clerkship with Gratiot, Chouteau & Co., a famous St. Louis trading house which had recently

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\* Sarah's Bible so records. Aunt Eva Calloley mentions an unrecorded set of twins who died at birth—so related to her by mother, Eliza, child of Sarah. It is also a tradition that before marriage Sarah dreamed that while washing twelve hose at the river bank, all but three floated away. This dream she later interpreted as a prophecy that she would bear twelve children, only three of whom would live.





established a branch at Gratiot's Grove in what is now La-Fayette County. The business of the firm was smelting lead, selling equipment and provisions, and trading with the Indians for furs.

A truly accurate and complete account of the lives of the pioneers, John and Sarah, requires a digression into the fascinating history of the Upper Lead Region.

### The Upper Lead Mining Region.

In a search for the Orient via the west, Jean Nicollet in 1634 discovered Wisconsin and claimed it for the king of France. Though no Spaniard had ever seen Wisconsin, the Spanish laid claim to the Mississippi valley from the voyage of De Soto in 1541 on the lower Mississippi. What now constitutes Grant and Iowa counties was first seen by white man in 1673 when Marquette, carrying the cross of Christ, and Joliet, armed with the flag of France, descended the Wisconsin River to its mouth and proceeded southward on the Mississippi to the "Illinois Country."

The first explorer of the Upper Lead region was Le Sueur, accompanied by his reporter, Perrecaut. Under commission and permission from the French King, these men and their followers went up the Riviere a la Mine\* marking sites of Indian mines. At the mouth of the Grant River a stop was made to purchase lead from the Indians for bullets. This, the first visit of white man to Potosi, was in 1700.

Copper was the object of Le Sueur's search. That lead was available in this region at the corner of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa was already known. Since as early as 1690, lead obtained from La Pointe\*\* by the Indians was

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\* Since called successively Fever River and Galena River.

\*\* The triangular piece of land between the Galena and Mississippi Rivers.





an article of traffic with the French traders at Peoria. Indeed there is evidence that Perrot, who had a fur trading post at the mouth of the Wisconsin as early as 1685 or 1687, was mining east of Dubuque prior to the journeys of Le Sueur.

To a small extent between 1723 and 1745 the French, with crown consent, worked outcroppings. From the time the English took possession in 1760 until the United States granted mining leases to lead miners beginning in 1823, the Indians were essentially the sole diggers. However in 1788 Julien Dubuque at an Indian council at Prairie du Chien was given permission to work the lead mines. He had explored the lead region two years previously. His activities were principally on the west side of the river, then owned by Spain. He neglected to perfect his title with the Spanish Crown, with the result that after the purchase of "Louisiana" from France in 1803, that territory having in the meantime been transferred from Spain to France, Dubuque's heirs and assigns were dispossessed. But from 1788 to 1810 Dubuque was buying, digging, and smelting lead.

In the Treaty of 1783 England surrendered to the United States all claim of the territory of the lead region east of the Mississippi. It was not until 1816 however that the United States took formal and permanent possession at Prairie du Chien, which had been captured by the British during the War of 1812. In 1821 Fort Crawford was built at Prairie du Chien, and the control of mines was given to the War Department. These two events marked the real beginning of the lead mining industry in Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa.

By treaties with the various tribes of Indians in 1804, 1816, 1817, 1826, 1828, 1829, 1831, and 1832 the United States claimed title to the lands of the lead region. This





was disputed by the Winnebagoes in 1827-1828 and by the Sauks and Foxes in 1831-32, which disputes add color to this story of the pioneer John and Sarah, to whom we now more directly return.

#### First Settlers in the Lead Region.

In 1822 James Johnson of Kentucky obtained a lease from the Indians to dig for lead with negro slaves. He found desultory mining already in progress. Ancient shallow diggings were found and also crude furnaces made by digging pits in hill slopes. Jesse Shull was already in Galena by special favor of the Sauk and Fox. Likewise Van Meter and Muir, who had Indian wives. Johnson established a military guard and immediately systemized the mining operations. This was the start of large scale mining in the Galena area.

In 1825 the brothers Henry and J. P. B. Gratiot, sons of the Gratiot of the trading house of Chouteau and Gratiot in St. Louis, left St. Louis by horse and wagon for the lead region of the Upper Mississippi. They journeyed by way of Peoria and Dixon's Ferry. In 1826 they sent for their families, who came by boat up the Mississippi and Galena rivers, and thence overland to Gratiot's Grove. The trip took sixty days.

Gratiot's Grove had been established by the Gratiot brothers as a mining and trading center about fifteen miles northeast of Galena. Before the end of 1826 six log smelting furnaces were in operation and sixty French and Indians were employed. A school was opened in 1828. When the land was surveyed early in 1833, it was found that township 1 north, range 2 east contained three settlements, — Gratiot's Grove, Shullsburg, and White Oak Springs. The two former prior to this time had upwards of forty families each.





A roving contributor of the New York "Tribune" who made an early visit to Gratiot's Grove, thus describes the locality:

"In all my travels in the West, I have not seen a section of country combining so many advantages with so much mineral and agricultural wealth, and so well watered and timbered, as the country around Gratiot's Grove. Nature never spread out a fairer and nobler field for the enterprising genius of man. The great natural beauty of the country, with its shady groves, its high rolling prairies, and its rippling streams; the fertility of the soil, the richness of the mines and the salubrity of the climate, cannot be surpassed."

The country abounded with game, particularly deer. Grouse, ducks, geese and other fowl were plentiful. The streams were clear and plentiful with trout and bass.

It was to this community that John and Sarah came in 1827. Four children had already been born to them. Of these four, John B., unnamed twin sister, John Wm., and Elizabeth, nothing is known. It is likely that the trip from St. Louis was made by boat to Galena, thence overland to Gratiot's Grove, where a lively village was growing up around the furnaces and store of the Gratiots. John had been sent as clerk for the Gratiots from the fathering establishment in St. Louis. J. P. B. Gratiot was apparently primarily interested in the mining. Henry Gratiot was government agent for the Winnebagoes and a man of much public spirit. His activities were such that it may be assumed safely that much of the actual running of the business of the trading post was intrusted to John R. Coons.

The population grew by leaps and bounds. In the entire Galena River country there were only 150 people at the first of 1826. By the middle of the year the population had tripled. By 1827 the lead output of the Upper Mississippi was exceeding that of the Missouri mines.

The culture of the region was largely confined to Gra-





tiot's Grove. The Gratiot brothers were well educated. They spoke English and French fluently, as did their trusted employee, John R. Coons. Henry Gratiot's wife was Susan Hempstead of Connecticut; and the wife of brother Beon (as J. P. B. Gratiot was called) had fled France during the Revolution, her mother being a lady-in-waiting to the unfortunate Marie Antoinette. Caleb Atwater, Indian Commissioner, who visited the Grove in 1831, wrote as follows:

"About twenty families reside in this secluded grove. Among the interesting people here are Mrs. Henry Gratiot, who was born and educated in New London, Connecticut; Mrs. J. P. B. Gratiot who was born and educated in Paris; and Mrs. John R. Coonce (Coons), who is a daughter of the celebrated English botanist, John Bradbury, who was born and educated in London. They all live within a few rods of each other.  
\* \* \* There is a post-office here, and mail passes through the place once a week, to and from Galena. Mr. Gratiot has large lead furnaces here; and there is a dry-goods store, but no doggery in the village."

The fun of the village consisted in surprise parties in the winter, dances, and sleigh rides to Galena.

In 1827 the peace of the region was threatened by the Winnebagoes who claimed to have been ignored when the land was purchased from other tribes. But Colonel Henry Gratiot had had the foresight not only to secure a mining lease from the United States, but also from the Winnebagoes, for whom he was agent. Nevertheless the miners of lead region organized a company of over one hundred volunteers, who chose Col. Henry Dodge as their commander.

Frivolity was in the air on July 4, 1827. Adèle Gratiot, wife of J. P. B. Gratiot, was entertaining. As she was carrying a bowl of custard to the table, she saw four Indians with guns in hand coming to the house. In her surprise





the bowl fell from her hands. The Indians proved to be friendly Winnebago chiefs who had come to warn their friends, the Gratiots, that the young braves of the tribe were on the warpath because of encroachments on their lands; and that they, the chiefs, considered it unsafe for the women and children to stay at the Grove. Immediately the men set to work to enlarge and strengthen the stockade. The women and children, under guard, were sent by horse and wagon to Galena where block houses, standing on the heights overlooking the town, safeguarded against the Indians.

No attack of consequence was made south of the Wisconsin River; the Winnebagoes soon were defeated; and ceded their claims to the lead lands.

Many of the miners had fled the country during the Winnebago war. The murder and scalping of women and children was too realistic to be faced by any except the staunchest hearts. The termination of the war brought a temporary restoration of peace and a renewed influx of miners. In 1828 consternation struck again. To the little settlement at Gratiot's grove, it gave more fear than the trouble of the previous year. For this time the Winnebagoes massed at the Plattville Mounds, less than fifteen miles distant. Here several score of young braves, less amenable to the influence of Colonel Gratiot than their fathers, gathered to make war. They were quickly dispersed, however. Again trouble was temporarily over; peace was restored until the occurrence of the Black Hawk war in 1832. Locally the disturbance of 1828 is spoken of as the "Winnebago Fuss". In July of 1829 a permanent peace treaty was secured with the Winnebagoes at Prairie du Chien. From then on mining activities spread north to Mineral Point and Dodgeville.

Meanwhile John and Sarah Coons continued to reside





near the Gratiots in a log house a story and a half high. During the latter uprising of the Indians, their apprehension must have been real indeed, for Sarah was soon to be the mother of Henry B. Coons, born January 30, 1829. The next child, Samuel Berry Coons, was born March 19, 1831.\* For this confinement the mother journeyed to the home of her parents in St. Louis. The Sauk and Fox of west of the Mississippi were exhibiting unrest. This circumstance plus the lack of proper care in a pioneer community, properly persuaded the mother to visit St. Louis for the event ahead.

### The Black Hawk War.

It is not the purpose of this narrative to recite the causes or detail the battles and atrocities of the War of 1832 with the Sauk and Fox, lead by Black Hawk. These Indians, who for many years had dwelt largely west of the Mississippi, contended that the Treaty of 1804 at St. Louis had been obtained from them by false promises; that the whites had not lived up to their obligations in the compact; and that the Indian braves who signed the treaty were not authorized by the tribes of the Sauk and Fox. In 1830 Black Hawk and his band crossed the river and journeyed by the great Sauk trail (which may still be observed south of Chicago) to consult with the British in Canada near Detroit. He was confirmed in his convictions and told that the government of the United States would assist him in repelling squatters from the old hunting grounds and village of the combined tribe east of the river.

Thus encouraged, Black Hawk returned to his village in the early spring of 1831 and threatened force. It was then that the discreet Sarah went to St. Louis. Through friendly Winnebagoes Colonel Cratiot was kept advised of the Indian temper. The Illinois militia, called out by

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\* A newspaper obituary of Samuel Berry Coons gives his birth date as March 5. The 19th is recorded in his mother's Bible, however.





Governor Reynolds, drove the "British band of Black Hawk" across the river, where the Indians humbly promised to remain.

In the spring of 1832, however, the band was on the war-path. On April 6, the band crossed the Mississippi, sought the help of the Winnebagoes and Chippewas, and attacked outlying farms and settlements. The news of the invasion spread like wildfire through the mining region. Colonel Henry Dodge, then commandant of Michigan (of which Wisconsin was then a part) militia west of Lake Michigan raised a battalion of two hundred volunteers from the lead region. This command of mounted rangers was joined by John R. Coons. He enrolled in the company of Captain James Stephenson of Galena on May 19.\*

It was a picturesque contingent that Colonel Dodge offered as reinforcement of the United States regulars. Dodge was a soldier, sheriff, and miner from Missouri. He was a typical frontiersman of the better class, and a personal friend of the Gratiots. To the Indians he was known as "Hairy Face". In 1832 he dwelt and mined south of Dodgeville. His troops were of similar bearing. They are vividly described by Thwaites in "Wisconsin":

"Dodge's rangers, gathered from the mines and fields, were a free and easy set of fellows, destitute of uniforms, but imbued with the spirit of adventure and the customary frontiersman's intense hatred of the Indians whom they had ruthlessly displaced. While disciplined to the extent of obeying orders whenever sent into the teeth of danger, these Rough Riders of 1832 swung through the country with small regard for the rules of the manual, and presented a striking contrast to the habits and appearance of the regulars."

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\* This company was known as the Galena Mounted Riflemen. It was an independent company attached to the command of Colonel Dodge. The roll of the company included many from Wisconsin, including Jesse Shull, the founder of Shullsburg, for it was commonly believed until the base line boundary was established by survey in 1833 that the most southerly lead towns in Wisconsin were in Illinois. Hence the roster of Captain Stephenson's company, found in the Adjutant General's reports from Illinois, includes many Wisconsin pioneers.





Yet it was this band of rangers that not only protected the lead region from serious assault; but was largely responsible for the ultimate defeat of Black Hawk in August 1832 on the Bad Axe River.

News of the Sauk invasion quickly reached Gratiot's Grove. Forts and stockades were built throughout the lead region: Fort Hamilton at Wiota, Fort Defiance in Willow Springs south of Mineral Point; Fort Union at the residence of Colonel Dodge south of the present Dodgeville; Fort Jackson at Mineral Point; Mound Fort at Blue Mounds; Blockhouse south of Platteville; and others. Because Colonel Gratiot was friendly with the Winnebagoes, perhaps his community was not sufficiently alarmed. But the bloody attack at Apple River Fort near the present village of Elizabeth, about twenty miles south; and the massacre at Spafford's Ford about fifteen miles east caused the women and children to seek a place of greater security at Galena.

Fervent hatred of the Indian and anxiety for his family must have mingled in the thoughts of John R. Coons when he saw his wife and children driven from their home by fear of a ruthless and savage enemy. Neither Henry B. Coons, then age three and a half years, nor his brother Samuel, age one and a half, was old enough to remember the incident. If the older brothers and sister were alive, they were at an age when war would impress its incidents upon them for life.

Seaton relates that after the departure of the women and children for Galena, the Coons house, being strongly built, was converted into a place of defense and garrisoned with soldiers.

One incident of the Black Hawk war requires special mention because of the part taken therein by John R. Coons: On May 21, 1832 about seventy Indians under the command





of the renegade Simon Girty attacked a settlement near Ottawa, Illinois, killing and scalping fifteen persons, and taking prisoner two young women, Rachel and Sylvia Hall. A reward of \$2,000 was offered the Winnebagoes if they would secure the release of these girls. John R. Coons was one of a detachment sent out by the Winnebago agent, Colonel Henry Gratiot, in search of the young women. The captives were brought to the Mound Fort on June 3rd in a forlorn and famished condition, having traveled on horseback most of the time from their capture, their hunger stayed chiefly by dried beans. The Winnebagoes and the girls were feasted "sumptuously on a large beef stew". The next day Colonel Dodge, who was at Blue Mounds when the Hall girls were brought in, took them to Morrisons Grove where they were met by Colonel Gratiot. On June 5th the contingent returned to Gratiot's Grove.

Within a day or two John R. Coons had rejoined his company, which proceeded to Buffalo Grove (near Polo, Illinois) where five men had been ambushed by the Indians. The marauders were not found. On the 17th of June while Captain Stephenson's company was engaged in scouting, a band of Indians under Black Hawk himself was encountered near the headwaters of Yellow Creek. The Indians in superior numbers secured the advantage of position and could not be driven therefrom after three successive charges. Three of the company were killed in the action and the captain wounded.

On June 29th the murderers of two farmers near Sinsinawa Mound were pursued across the Mississippi. The company then marched to the Sugar River to join the rest of the Dodge command, other troops being sent to guard the mining region. On July 21st the main body of the Indians was overtaken at Wisconsin Heights. Colonel Dodge and his troops took an advanced center position and were under heavy fire for an hour. Upon the arrival of Colonel





Henry's command the Indian lines were charged and routed across the Wisconsin River, with a loss of sixty-eight killed against one casualty for the Americans.

The troops of Colonel Dodge, with worn out horses, were temporarily dismissed. Black Hawk was finally defeated on August 2nd on the Bad Axe River.

Of the services of John R. Coons, Seaton wrote for the "History of Grant County",

"Major Coons took an active part \* \* \* his services were untiring."

It has not been ascertained when nor under what circumstances the title of major was bestowed.

#### Permanent Peace.

After peace was restored Gratiot's Grove continued to prosper. The government as royalty for the lease of mining rights collected ten per cent, afterward reduced, of the value of the smelted lead. Smelters were licensed and required to post a bond of \$10,000 with the United States to insure their collection of the royalty and its turning over. In 1836 Colonel Gratiot visited Washington to promote a bill to establish Wisconsin as a territory. To show the value of the lead mines, it was pointed out that since 1826 he had paid to the government over \$60,000. Since the value of the lead smelted was ten times that sum, some idea is given of the amount of ore which had passed through the furnaces at Gratiot's Grove in ten years, even though the price had fallen from \$4.50 per hundred in 1827 to \$2.00 in 1829.

On July 10, 1833, a daughter was born to John and Sarah, and named after her mother.

It was in this year, and possibly before the birth of the infant Sarah, that the Coons family moved to a new home





near the mouth of Catfish Creek on the west side of the Mississippi, near Dubuque's settlement.

Gratiot's Grove dwindled in importance after the death of Colonel Gratiot in 1836. The mines near Shullsburg proving more profitable, that village grew and in 1845 was awarded the postoffice over the Grove. From thence on the community of Gratiot's Grove died a lingering death. Its site is now indicated by an inartistic sign nailed to a fence post.

Gratiot's Grove was in township 1 north and range 2 east. Shullsburg and White Oak Springs were and are in the same township. The present village of Gratiot is approximately ten miles east. So that the places mentioned herein may be more accurately seen in their relation to each other, there is inserted a sketch map taken largely from the Chandler map of 1829 and the Lapham map of 1845.

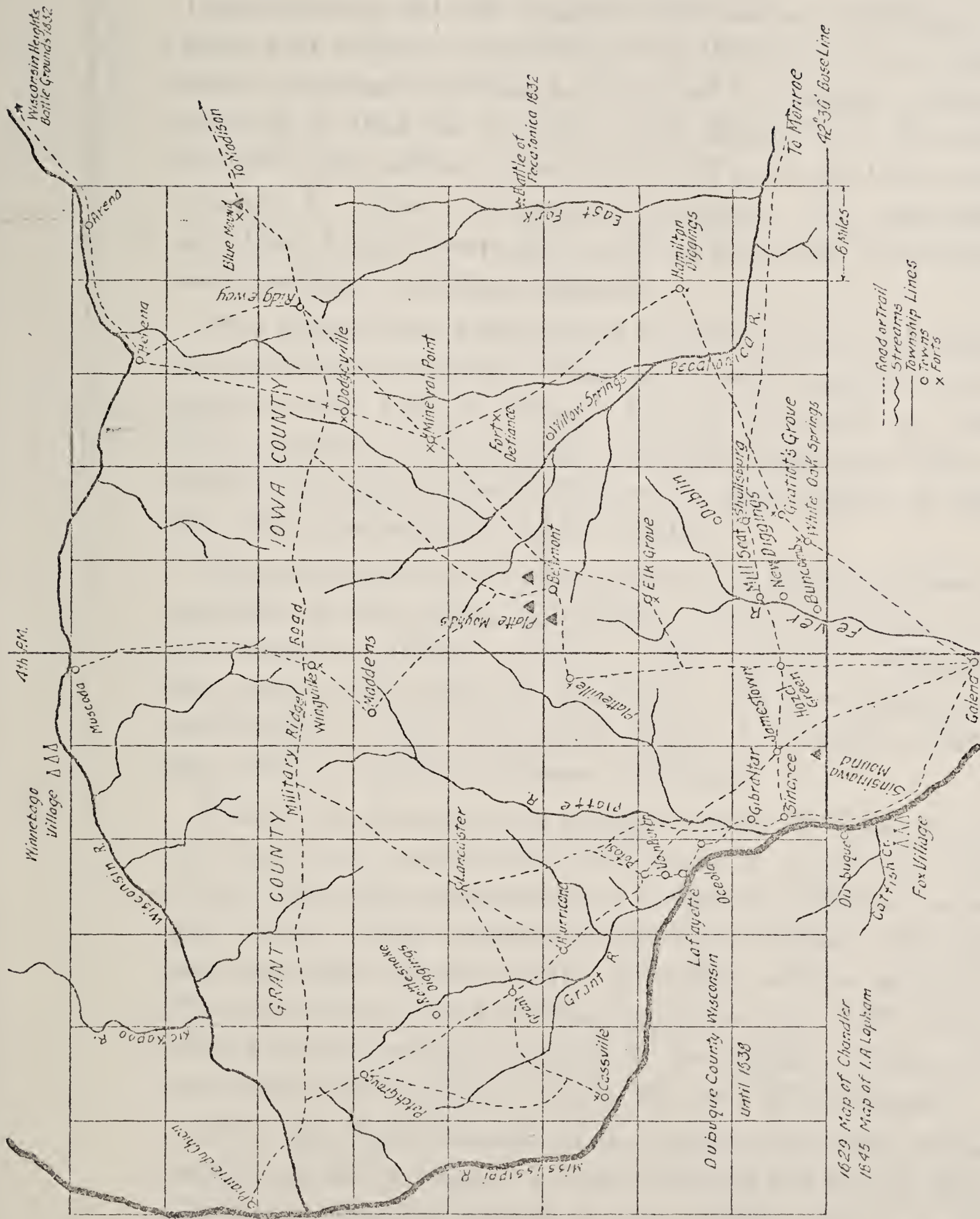
#### At Catfish Creek.

On the 28th day of September in the year 1788 at Prairie du Chien, Julien Dubuque received from the Fox Indians comprising five villages west of the Mississippi, the chief of which was at the mouth of the little Maquoketa, a writing to

“sell and abandon to him all the coast and contents of the mine discovered by the wife of Peosta \* \* \* and in case he shall find nothing within, he shall be free to search wherever he may think proper to do so \* \* \*,”

The Spanish governor at New Orleans, Carondelet, approved this conveyance in 1796. Upon this title the heirs and assigns of Dubuque, including Henry Chouteau of St. Louis, claimed entire ownership of over 97,000 acres, from the “petite Maquanquitois” (little Maquoketa) to Tete





1629 Map of Chandler  
1845 Map of I.A. Lapham





des Morts and three leagues westward from the Mississippi. This included all the lead region of Iowa. The United States did not recognize the claims of Dubuque's heirs and assigns, contending that Dubuque was granted only a personal privilege to mine and to prospect; and on January 5, 1833, the troubles of the Black Hawk War being over, the military detachment at Prairie du Chien was ordered to remove the settlers by force. The claimants and their tenants were driven off at the point of the bayonet and their dwellings burned.

The United States then began to grant mining and smelting rights to its citizens. One of the early applicants and grantees was John R. Coons. In 1833 he moved his family to a site near the mouth of Catfish Creek and under a smelter's grant erected a furnace for the refining of lead ore, duly posting his bond for \$10,000.

At thirty-three years of age John R. Coons had been a resident of four states, the father of seven children, and a veteran of Indian warfare. His economic endeavors had been as an employee of others. He now became an entrepreneur. The garrisoned home at Gratiot's Grove was left to establish residence elsewhere.

Before the departure an accident occurred which nearly left the family motherless. Son Henry B., aged four and a half years, left unattended for a moment, found a loaded gun in one of the recesses of the Grove home. The gun had been left by one of the defenders of the garrison. Playing soldier, the boy discharged the gun. The blast lodged in the bed just vacated by the mother. Henry B. remembered the incident vividly the rest of his years.

When the family moved to the Catfish, the City of Dubuque was not in being. It was not until the 2nd of July, 1836 that Congress passed an act creating the towns of Fort Madison, Burlington, Peru, Belleview and Dubuque





in the Territory of Wisconsin. At that time what is now Iowa constituted a part of the Territory of Wisconsin.

The friend of John R. Coons, J. W. Seaton of Potosi, is authority for the statement that as a smelter, John R. Coons enjoyed the confidence of the miners and did a lucrative business, the ten per cent rental of the United States amounting to thousands of dollars.

It is not definitely established whether the mother's namesake, Sarah, who was born July 10, 1833, first saw the light of day in Gratiot's Grove or on the Catfish. She was the seventh child born to John and Sarah. On July 12, 1834 Marie Louisa and unnamed twin brother were born.

The tenth and last recorded child, Eliza, was born January 16, 1836, probably at Catfish, though possibly at old Belmont where the family next resided.

Of the ten recorded children born to John and Sarah, only Henry B., Samuel Berry, and Eliza are known to have reached maturity. Henry Coons of Potosi, Uncle Henry, states that he remembers being told as a child that two brothers of his father, Henry B., were buried at Dubuque.

#### At Old Belmont.

The Indian right of occupancy having been forever extinguished by treaty following the Black Hawk War for all that territory south and east of the Wisconsin and Fox Rivers, a clamor arose for the organization of a territorial government separate from Michigan to which what is now Wisconsin was attached. On July 4, 1836 Wisconsin became a territory of the United States in its own right. As created the new territory extended from Lake Michigan to the Missouri River.

President Jackson appointed Colonel Henry Dodge Gov-





ernor. By virtue of his office, Dodge was also commander-in-chief of militia and superintendent of Indian affairs. His approval was required before any laws could take effect. The legislature was to hold its first session at such time and place as he might appoint. For all these responsibilities, Governor Dodge received an annual salary of \$2500 per year.

The first sale of public lands in the present state was held from the Mineral Point land office on November 1834, by which there was offered for sale all the land now comprising Grant County. On the 7th and 21st days of September 1835 there was brought into the market all the lands in the present Iowa and LaFayette Counties, and other land. Mineral bearing lands were excepted from such sales, the United States still clinging to its policy of leasing such lands.

On one of these days in September 1835, Sarah Coons was present. The far-sighted woman had travelled from Dubuque on horseback with her son Henry B. to enter land in the Eden of farming country. Her purchase was of land near Old Belmont, now Leslie, where the first capital of the territory was destined to be located. The land was purchased for \$1.25 an acre. The Hon. James Dolan of Platteville, Wisconsin, whose long practice at the bar has occasioned his examination of the title to most of the land in the Leslie neighborhood, states that nearly all of the land around Old Belmont was entered by James R. Gentry, the Moores, and John R. Coons.

The increment in value of this land is an interesting sidelight. In the years just preceding the World War improved farms in that locality sold for \$250 per acre. At the present time the market value is less than that by considerably more than one half. A far-sighted great grand-





daughter of Sarah has recently purchased a farm within sight of the Belmont Mound.

When Governor Dodge selected Old Belmont as the first territorial capital of Wisconsin, the rejoicing in the Coons household must have been exuberant. To that place the family moved. The father there conducted one of the largest dry goods stores north of St. Louis. He envisioned a large city, capital of a great commonwealth, built in part upon his subdivided land.

His was the first store in the new city, conducted under the name of Hooper, Peck, and Scales, of which firm John R. Coons was a partner. The first issue of the "Belmont Gazette" carried the advertisement of this store, largely featuring boots, shoes, groceries, and liquors.

In 1836 a postoffice was established by Act of Congress under the name of Belle Monte; and John R. Coons was appointed postmaster. The mail was received at and delivered from the store. A daily line of four-horse coaches carried passengers and mail from Galena to Portage on the Blue Mound and Portage City Military Route.

The territorial legislature assembled October 25, 1836. A railroad was chartered to run from the Mississippi to Dodgeville through Belmont and Mineral Point. (It was never constructed. The first railroad into the lead territory reached Galena from Chicago in 1854.)

Another act chartered the Miners' bank of the newly founded Dubuque, and the Bank of Mineral Point.

The principal question of the session was the location of the permanent seat of government. Numerous speculators were in attendance with beautiful maps of existing and prospective cities. Dubuque, Fond du Lac, Portage, Helena, Racine, Platteville, Belmont, Cassville, Green Bay, Peru, Mineral Point, and others were considered. Madison, a





paper city, was chosen. Madison town lots in large numbers were freely distributed to members of the legislature to influence their votes. Those voting against the choice were largely from the mining region.

The soaring hopes of John and Sarah were blighted by the strangulation of the young city. They sold their land and business interests and moved to new fields.

The territorial census of 1836 lists John R. Coonce as a resident of the then Iowa\* County, apparently in Pickatolik (Pecatonica) township. The household is enumerated as numbering eight. This does not necessarily mean that six children were then living for a household was then considered as including all employees.

#### At Potosi.

One act of the territorial legislative session at Old Belmont was to establish Grant\* county with its present boundaries. The first white settlement in this county was a temporary occupation in 1822 near the mouth of the Grant River where the town of Occola was afterward located, and hard by the Indian village of Pascanaus. In 1829 Tom Hymer, camping for the night near a fallen tree, discovered lead in the torn earth. This was approximately where St. Thomas Catholic Church now stands in Potosi.

In 1832 Willis St. John and Isaac Whitaker were wandering home after the Battle of Bad Axe. In what the Indians called Snake Hollow because of its narrow, twisting path, these men made further discoveries of lead. Three settlements grew up along the length of this narrow valley of what is now known as Potosi Creek. Increase Allen Lapham in his book, "Wisconsin", first published in 1845,

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\* Named from the Indian tribe which once inhabited the region.

\* Named from its principal river, in turn named from one Grant, a trapper, who had his cabin on its bank.





states that improvements commenced in this valley in 1836. The valley is three miles long and varies from 100 to 300 yards in width.

For many years this valley was considered as the most important place on the Mississippi in the mineral country. A grant of one section of land was made by Congress in 1844 to improve the channel of the Grant River and to connect it more directly with the Mississippi at the mouth of the valley. The section selected was number 34 in town 3 N. range 3 W., wherein was the village of Snake Hollow or Potosi. Pre-emption rights were granted to settlers and occupants and the land sold for the building of the canal, which was completed within two or three years.

There is inserted herein a sketch map of parts of the townships of Potosi and Paris in Grant county designed to show the location of the snake-shaped hollow and the settlements therein of the early mining days. Each block is a section a mile square. Oceola, Van Buren, Potosi, LaFayette, British Hollow, and Tennyson are shown. The map is taken from the Lapham map of 1845 and an old original silk fabric map possessed by Henry B. Coons and perhaps his father, John R.

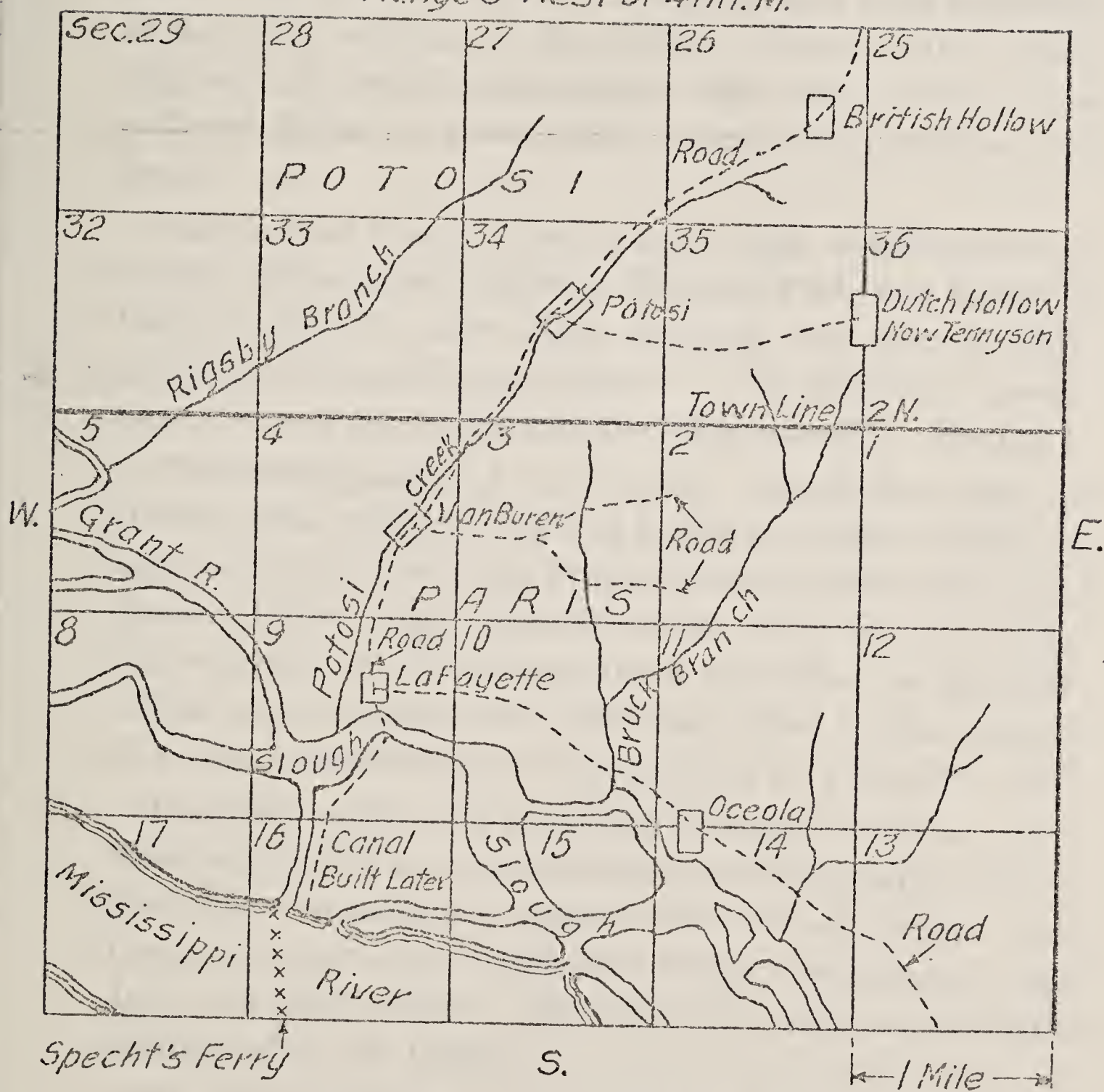
The "History of Grant County", 1881, recites that to the village of La Fayette in 1837 prominent arrivals were John R. Coons and W. A. Coons. These men were apparently brothers. Later W. A. Coons moved to LaSalle and Lincoln, Illinois, where his wife, Catherine, died in 1875. The census of territorial Wisconsin in 1836 does not record a W. A. Coons in the lead region. It is likely that W. A. Coons came from Kentucky or Missouri to join his brother. Seaton gives the date of arrival of John R. Coons as 1836.

John and Sarah established their new and fifth home at LaFayette at the mouth of the valley, approximately where





N.  
Range 3 West of 4th P.M.



Parts of the Towns of Paris and Potosi in Grant County, Wisconsin, in the early mining days.



the Potosi station on the Burlington railroad is now located. There they built the first frame building in the Hollow, shipping the material from Cincinnati by way of the Ohio, Mississippi, and Grant Rivers. Bright commercial prospects were on the horizon. A railroad had been chartered to have its terminus in the Hollow. Some of the richest diggings of the mineral country were near. Even if the railroad failed to materialize, water transportation was good.

The firm of Coons, Wooley & Co. was established as a branch of the parent house of Hooper, Peck, and Scales of Galena. Into the new frame building were placed staple groceries, dry goods, and liquors. "Its internal arrangements were a marvel of beauty and elegance". (Seaton.)

The development of La Fayette spelled the doom of Occola; after 1837 the rivals of La Fayette were Van Buren, approximately where the Potosi Brewery now stands, and Snake Hollow (now Potosi) at the head of the valley. The selection of Van Buren for a post office in 1838 furnished a disappointment. This was offset by the opening of a school established in a log cabin in La Fayette in 1838.

The first teacher was Cornelius Kennedy, a soldier of the Revolutionary War, who conducted his classes with military discipline. Among his pupils when school opened were Henry B. Coons, age 9; Samuel Berry Coons, age 7; and John and Mary Coons. The two latter were no doubt the children of W. A. Coons.

The Warren Lodge of Ancient York Masons was organized May 2, 1844 in the rooms above the Coons-Wooley store. Likewise, in this room in 1840 was organized the Presbyterian (now Congregational) Church of Potosi. To this church the Major was a contributor.

In the year 1845 the village was stirred by the challenge





to and acceptance of a duel. The principals were one Latimer, an Englishman, and White, from Kentucky. At the appointed time and place the principals and their seconds appeared; but no blood was shed, for through the good offices of Major Coons, an honorable settlement was reached.

The building of the canal from the Grant to the Mississippi beginning in 1844 facilitated the transportation of lead and supplies; but it also gave material boost to the village, Potosi, at the head of the Hollow, for to finance the building of the canal, land in that section, 34, theretofore reserved from entry as mineral land, was offered for sale.

At this time (1846-47) the country was overrun with depreciated currency and flooded with "wildcat" bank notes. The credit system predicated upon the worthless currency was deflated and collapsed. In this debacle the firm of Coons, Wooley & Co., and the parent, Hooper, Peck & Scales of Galena, failed to weather the storm. From then on Major Coons was a penniless man. Riches were within his grasp at Belmont and La Fayette, but fortune failed him; and he became the victim of the selfish predators who bribed the territorial legislature in 1836 to remove the capitol to Madison, and of unscrupulous bankers.

The once great store still stood in 1879 doing duty as a horse stable upon the farm of Nick Bonn.

After the disaster of the late forties, the hardships of pioneer life, and the responsibilities of many children, it is not surprising that John and Sarah, and perhaps some of their children as well, fell victim to the epidemics of malaria and cholera that swept the Valley in 1851 and 1852. On March 18, 1851, at the age of 51, the records of Sarah were certified to the Great Master. She lies buried in a forgotten cemetery in a town, Occola, which can no longer be found upon a map.



Her husband followed her to the same resting place on July 25, 1852, at the age of 52 years.

Their burial place is a lonely dell, but not inappropriate. They see beneath them the hurrying Zephyr trains and observe the clearing of all timber on the Grant Sloughs, and, perchance, comfort each other with a pitying observation about the times and trends in which their descendants live.

Sarah was a remarkable woman. Her pioneer spirit, her courage, and her vigor have been made apparent. She was an artist of no mean ability; and even after her marriage executed commissions in painting and in gilding for friends in St. Louis.

In "History of La Fayette County" she is described as of amiable disposition, a woman of high Christian virtue, and possessed with overflowing benevolence and charity.

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CHAPTER IV.

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## HENRY BRADBURY COONS AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

Henry B. Coons, the fifth child born to John and Sarah (Bradbury) Coons, was one of the very early white children to be born in the lead region. His birth occurred on January 30, 1829 at Gratiot's Grove, Michigan Territory, where his parents then resided in a strongly built story and a half log cabin. There were no nurses and no hospital to attend him and his mother. It is doubtful if even a doctor were in attendance. A midwife from among the neighbors probably performed the essential duties.

When Henry was two years old he journeyed to St. Louis with his mother who appropriately timed her visit to her parent's home to secure better care for the birth of Henry's brother, Samuel, born March 19, 1831.

Henry was but little over three years old when the Black Hawk war broke out. The mother and children, as recited in the previous chapter, were removed to a place of greater security at Galena.

At the age of approximately five years, Henry moved to the mouth of Catfish Creek west of the Mississippi, where Dubuque now stands. After three years there, the family moved to Old Belmont; and within a year, or less than two, to LaFayette. It was here that Henry first attended school in the first school house erected in Snake Hollow, 1838. Henry, his brother, Samuel, and two cousins were among those who attended that first year and under the tutelage of a veteran of the Revolution, Cornelius Kennedy.

The only schooling Henry received was in this log cabin school and at his mother's knee. It speaks well for his



teachers, his parents and himself that from these meagre opportunities he became a man of more than usual literary and scientific learning. He was a lover of books. Dickens and Carlyle were favorite authors. He possessed at his death complete sets of the works of these men.

Fossils and minerals commanded his interest. Of them he made a large and classified collection, gathered in Wisconsin and elsewhere. Letters were found among the papers of his son, John, who died in early manhood, asking that specimens be sent to him from Kentucky.

In early manhood Henry resided for one year on Lake Superior. (This statement was furnished to the compiler of the Wisconsin Blue Book for 1871 by Henry himself.) What his activities were at this outpost, where he was located, or what the year are lost in time.

In 1853 he became a Mason and until his death took much interest in the work of his lodge.

For three years, from 1856 to 1859, he was in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. In the latter year he returned to Potosi, where he resided the balance of his life except for a temporary absence in Montana from 1864 to 1866.

On the 9th of May, 1859, Henry was married to Clara Phebe White\* of Potosi. The ceremony that united this couple who lived together almost fifty years before death separated them was performed by Reverend Father Gibson, the resident priest of St. Thomas church of Potosi. (The history of this church would make an interesting study. It was organized in 1836, built of logs in 1838, and generally cared for until 1840, when a resident priest was obtained by the zealous Father Mazzuchelli, to whom southern Wisconsin is so largely indebted for religious and educational institutions.)

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\* The name is sometimes found as Clarissa Phoebe; but it appears herein as the subject, her mother, and her father wrote it.





It was said earlier in this writing that in respect to two persons the narrative would depart from the direct Coons' line. The first of these was John Bradbury; the second is Clara Phebe White, the bride of Henry B. Coons.

#### CLARA PHEBE WHITE.

Clara Phebe White was born in Chateaugay, New York, June 17, 1834. In 1842 she came with her parents to Plum Grove, Illinois. At the age of twelve she went to live with her half brother, James White, in Potosi. The wife of James White was a most estimable woman, Mary Weld, born and bred in New England, and married to James White in 1838 in Galena. Her brother, Hiram Weld, started the enterprise in 1835 of a ferry from the mouth of Snake Hollow to Weld's Landing across the river. The location of this across-river route is still known to boatmen as Specht's Ferry. The first frame house built in the present village of Potosi was occupied by James and Mary White.

To this home, which was a large one, came a half-orphaned girl of twelve in 1846. The house being large and commodious, itinerants were accommodated. The foster mother soon realized that that in such an atmosphere the adolescent girl should not remain. After providing such educational facilities as the village furnished, James and Mary sent Clara Phebe at the age of eighteen to St. Josephs College in Dubuque. Here the young lady received her higher education and here she joined the Catholic Church, to which faith she adhered until death.

After the completion of her work at St. Josephs, Clara Phebe returned to Potosi and made her home with her half-brother until her marriage.

That her days were not idle is indicated by the activities of the White household. Frequently after Clara Phebe's



return from Dubuque, the following, or similar announcement, appeared in the "Potosi Republican":

"Public House

JAMES WHITE Has opened his house located on North St., Potosi, for the accommodation of the travelling community, for the reception of transients and permanent boarders. He will endeavor to keep as good a table as the times will permit at reasonable charges. Horses provided for at a good stable, and by attentive ostlers."

What the "reasonable charges" were makes an interesting speculation. Newspaper items of that approximate time indicate that beef was \$3.00 a hundredweight; ham, 8¢ to 9¢ a pound; cornmeal, 60¢ a bushel; and eggs, 10¢ a dozen. The town boasted a bakery run by Ennor and Hays, but the "White House" no doubt produced its own breads and pastries. Perhaps on occasion there was served as dessert a novel refreshment from the Ice Cream Saloon of Pascal Mallett.

No foundation except probability is found for the statement that Henry Bradbury Coons was a frequent customer at White's public house. His mother and father were dead, and he was without a permanent home.

The ancestry of Clara Phebe White is not complete. Perhaps if more time and money were available, original records could be secured. For the table given below, acknowledgment is given to Bertha Wilson of Denver, whose grandmother was a sister of Clara Phebe.

..... Frost	
Sarah Frost, dau. m. ....	Dewey of Conn.
Theodosia Dewey, dau. m. ....	White of Vermont
(White had been previously married and had two sons, James and Benjamin, and other children)	
(Clara Phebe White, dau. of Theodosia Dewey and	
( .....	White, m. Henry B. Coons
( Hannah White, dau. of Theodosia Dewey and	
( .....	White, m. .... Armstrong





After the death of ..... White, Theodosia married Wm. Blute. At the time of her death she lived in Palatine or Plum Grove, Illinois.

It is clear that the only full sister or brother of Clara Phebe was Hannah, by marriage, Armstrong.

In a letter written September 5, 1853 to her daughters, Hannah and Phebe, in Potosi, Theodosia cautions them about railroad accidents (the railroad was not to reach Potosi for years yet) saying:

"If you ever ride in that way take the back cars. There is not near as much danger."

Clara Phebe was married May 9, 1859 to Henry Bradbury Coons, whom she survived about a year. She died from paralysis on April 10, 1909 at the age of 74 years, at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Theodore Runkel, in Potosi, Wisconsin. She is buried in British Hollow Cemetery.

The obituary in the Dubuque "Times-Journal" recites:

"In her death, this community has lost one of its oldest and most esteemed pioneer residents. She was known by everyone as a good and kind-hearted Christian woman and friend, a fond and faithful wife and a loving and devoted mother. She was a consistent member of the Catholic church and died fortified with all of the rites of the religion."

#### LIFE AND CHILDREN OF HENRY BRADBURY AND CLARA PHEBE COONS.

After the digression concerning Clara Phebe White, we return to the narrative at the time of her marriage to Henry B. Coons on May 9, 1859. For almost fifty years, until the death of the husband on June 15, 1908, this couple resided in Potosi, Wisconsin.

The activities of Henry B. were numerous. He earned his living as a clerk and live stock dealer. He was also interested in the Potosi steam saw mill. His reputation in



the community is attested by the many public offices he held. During his life he held nearly every public office in the village; for many years serving as town clerk. In 1870 he was elected from the Second District of Grant County to the Wisconsin Assembly.

Throughout his life Henry B. Coons was a faithful Democrat. In his election to the legislature he defeated his Republican opponent, William Wilcox, by 391 votes against 369; and was the only Democrat among the five delegates then elected from Grant County. He served a one-year term in the assembly year of 1871.

To the marriage of Henry B. Coons and Clara Phebe White were born five children, all at Potosi:

1. John S. Coons, born 1860. Died unmarried, February 2, 1880 at Louisville, Kentucky. (See *infra*.)
2. Sallie Coons, born December 4, 1861. (See *infra*.)
3. James Henry Coons, born April 18, 1864. (See *infra*.)
4. William Coons, died very young.
5. Hyman Eugene Coons, born November 3, 1872. (See *infra*.)

During the Civil War economic pressure and the difficulties of feeding a family sent Henry B. Coons to the Rocky Mountains to prospect for gold and silver. He was in the West most of two years between 1864 and 1865. That times were hard is shown by the price of calico, 50¢ a yard; tea, \$2.60 a pound; kerosene, 60¢ a gallon; flour \$5.00 a hundred.

The letters exchanged between husband and wife during this interval show hardship and fortitude on each side.

In August, 1865, Henry wrote from Helena, Montana. He had just received three letters, two from Phebe and one from Sam, his brother. Phebe had reported the family well; but Sam had said, as reported in Henry's letter to Phebe, that there were not

"any hopes of doing anything at home to make a cent."





It was impossible to have gone home at that time. The letter continues:

“The risk I would have to run in getting home, I have concluded not to attempt it until next June. \* \* \* if I can only raise enough money to pay my passage on a Steam Boat. \* \* \* In remaining in this Country until the Boats come up in the Spring I consider that I am taking the least risks. from all the news I can get from the plains the Indians are desperate and made more so by the handfull of Soldiers the Gov't has sent out. \* \* \* The emigrants who are coming now tell awful tales. They say they had to fight their way through, and that the number of emigrants who have lost their lives will never be known except to those who are interested.”

This same letter tells of the prospecting for precious metal. Gulch after gulch had proved fruitless one by one. On the next day he was setting off on horse and with pack pony to prospect in the Last Chance range. If there he had no luck, he would cross the mountains to the other side of the Missouri River and find some “diggings I can make wages on.”

Fortune did not smile! To someone else the riches of Last Chance gulch were revealed. The discoveries subsequently made there produced millions of dollars in gold and silver.

Phebe's letter to Henry dated May 6, 1865, is of interest. First she could not get started until ten o'clock because “the baby (Henry) was very cross and would not go to sleep.”

The war was over:

“There is a hundred thousand dollars offered for Jeff. Davis but I don't think they will get him. There is now not one rebel army in the field. \* \* \* We had a great parade here at the Presbyterian Church last Thursday.”



Henry's numerous letters were appreciated. Phebe was provoked because Mrs. B..... said,

"he is the biggest fool out of jail, he will spend all he can make buying postage stamps."

After the return from the West, Henry ran for Register of Deeds of Grant County in 1869 but was defeated. In 1870, as previously related, he was elected to the legislature. In 1877, after having already served seven years prior to 1871 as town clerk, he was again a candidate for that office.

The election must have been a close one for relatives and friends were invited in from the country to vote. Particularly Aunt Eliza (daughter of John R. and Sarah) and her family were expected. (Letter, Sallie Coons to her brother Johnie, April 3, 1877.)

The simple, wholesome family life of Henry and Phebe is revealed in a letter from Phebe to her son Johnie in Kentucky, January 28, 1877. The family had been sleigh riding on the Mississippi the day before, and had crossed over to Iowa to visit the trout ponds. As the mother wrote to the absent son of 17, Gene, age 5, was cracking nuts and singing. Henry, 13, and Sallie, 16, were at Sunday School. A travelling photographer had just taken their pictures. "Pa and Kinneys have gone out for a ride as usual." "The young folks have a Lyceum and seem to enjoy it."

The death of Phebe has been previously related. Henry B. Coons died June 15, 1908 at the age of 79 years, and was buried in British Hollow Cemetery. He left three surviving children, all then residing in Potosi.





## THE CHILDREN OF HENRY B. COONS.

## 1.

John S. Coons.

John S. Coons, known to the family as Johnie, was born in Potosi, Wisconsin in 1860. At the age of 17 he went to Louisville, Kentucky as an employee of Brinly, Miles and Hardy, manufacturers of patented plows and cultivators. The Brinlys were relatives, else so young a boy would scarcely have been sent so far from home to seek employment and learn a trade.

On February 2, 1880, in his 20th year, he suddenly became seriously ill with typhoid fever, and died before his parents could be notified. Word was taken from Potosi to his father in Lancaster where the father was in attendance in court as under-sheriff. The messenger's face revealed his tidings and without inquiry the father said, "Johnie is dead."

A telegram was immediately dispatched to Louisville to forward the body of Potosi for burial in the British Hollow Cemetery.

## 2.

Sallie Coons.

Sallie Coons, daughter of Henry B. and Clara Phebe Coons was born in Potosi, Wisconsin, December 4, 1861. She was educated in the public schools of Potosi, and trained in household arts by her competent mother. Before the age of 20 she was engaged to teach the district school at Jamestown, Wisconsin, a small community whose importance had dwindled as the nearby mines became of lesser importance.

On Sunday, October 16, 1881, she wrote to her mother that she had gone to church and marveled at the \$2900



altar. She roomed and boarded with a Ludwig family in which were two handsome sons, but one was already engaged and the other too young, "so I am left as usual." Her salary was \$27.00 a month for a five month's term.

Apparently the styles of 1881 had one similarity to present day trends for on October 30th, Sallie wrote her mother that she had been scolded by Mrs. Ludwig about her tightly-fitting clothes. The reprimand must have been justified for "I can hardly button both of my polonaise. Am going to let the seams out."

In 1882 a better job was obtained in the village of Sinopee on the Mississippi a few miles above Dubuque. As she there began her work her father wrote her:

"I hope you will make a success of your school and remember that if you steal the money from the district, that is the smallest part of the wrong. They can get more money, but if you steal six months of those children's time, it is lost to them forever."

For a number of terms Sallie taught in Cassville, Wisconsin.

On June 12, 1890 she was married to Theodore H. Runkel by Rev. Sallie of St. Andrew's Catholic Church in Tennyson, Wisconsin.

Mr. Runkel was of German stock, had been a lumber raftsman on Wisconsin rivers; and at the time of his marriage was a young storekeeper in Potosi. He was born in Germantown, Wisconsin, November 26, 1864. He came to Potosi in 1888 to enter the employ of W. H. Hunt, the leading merchant. In 1889 with the advice and backing of friends he branched into business for himself under the name of T. H. Runkel & Co.

To Sallie and her husband two children were born, both at Potosi; first, Percy Bradbury, October 6, 1891; and second, Clara Margaret, January 5, 1899.

The young merchant, Theodore, prospered, and eventu-





ally became sole proprietor of the business. He provided his children with educations at the Platteville Normal, now Platteville State Teachers' College; and indulged their desires for music and music lessons.

On November 13, 1916, the Runkel store was destroyed by fire. A tramp had been confined in the town jail for drunkenness. Thinking to effect an escape, he set fire to the jail; but he not only lost his own life but destroyed much of the business district of the town, including the village hall, the Runkel store, a livery stable, the H. E. Coons hardware store, and a warehouse.

Not daunted by their losses, Runkel and H. E. (Gene) Coons formed a partnership, including Percy, under the name of Runkel-Coons Co., to engage in business in a large and general merchandise and hardware store. A new building was erected, equipped with an electric generator (the first in Potosi); and a stock of merchandise from silks to plows installed.

Hard work and worry took its toll; and on January 31, 1919, Mr. Runkel suffered a stroke. He died February 2nd, without regaining consciousness.

The widow continued to make her home in Potosi, where she resided until her death in 1933.

Sallie Runkel was of a quiet but genial nature. To those who will trouble themselves to learn from others she offered a lesson of value. She had cultivated the habit of avoiding petty annoyances. Hence she was never complaining and ever adaptable.

Sallie Coons Runkel died April 18, 1933 at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Clara Hobbs, in Chicago, Illinois. She was buried close to her parents in British Hollow Cemetery. Death was caused by a cerebral hemorrhage and complications. Funeral services were conducted in the home of her son, Percy, in Potosi, by Rev. Kracker of Dubuque.



Of the children of Sallie Coons and Theodore H. Runkel, as with others of their generation, it is not within the scope of this book to treat at length. Percy Bradbury Runkel was born October 6, 1891. He was graduated from Potosi High School in 1910 and attended Platteville Normal. He was married in 1922 to Vera Scheppele, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Scheppele of Dubuque. Upon his marriage the Runkel home in Potosi was divided into two apartments, Percy and his wife occupying one, and his mother and sister the other.

Following his father's death, Percy conducted a drug store in Potosi and sold insurance.

On March 27, 1930, a daughter, Miriam Margaret, was born.

In 1934, Percy and his family moved to Dubuque. On July 3, 1936, Percy passed away suddenly at the Finley Hospital in Dubuque. Funeral services were conducted in the Congregational Church in Potosi, Rev. Kracker and Rev. White of Dubuque officiating. Burial was made at British Hollow.

Vera, his widow, and Miriam now reside in Dubuque.

Clara Margaret Runkel, daughter of Sallie Coons Runkel was born at Potosi on January 5, 1899. She was graduated from Potosi High School in 1916 and from Platteville Normal in 1918. She attended summer sessions at the University of Wisconsin. Before marriage she taught in the grammar schools in Potosi and in Madison, Wisconsin. She was married to M. K. Hobbs, an attorney of Chicago, Illinois, on March 24, 1925; and since her marriage has resided in Chicago, where she is active in women's club work and church activities.

Sallie Coons and her daughter at early ages became members of the Order of the Eastern Star. Percy was a Mason.





## 3.

## James Henry Coons.

The subject of this section was born in Potosi April 18, 1864, the third child of Henry B. Coons and Clara Phebe White. He was a precocious child and caused his father some concern because "Henry does not have to work hard at school" (Henry B. to John S., letter October 20, 1877).

Henry was a fast growing youth, and heavy; and at the age of 15 "hired out to Mr. Kinney to make hay". (Clara Phebe to John S., letter August 30, 1879). In 1881, Henry went to work in the Hunt store and "can stay as long as he suits". (Clara Phebe to Sally, letter February 3, 1881).

Reading about the defeat of Tilden in 1876, at the age 12 (Sallie to John S. letter November 13, 1876), Henry apparently lost hope in the Democratic cause; for, unlike his father, he has never been active in politics.

Henry Coons' expertness as a hunter and fisherman is matched only by his wife's skill in preparing the catch for the table.

He is now retired after a busy life as representative for clothing manufacturers.

On August 21, 1901, he married Mae Edwards of Viroqua, Wisconsin. Their married life has been spent in Potosi, save for two or three years spent in Madison to facilitate the education of their sons.

The children, all born in Potosi, are:

a. Donald, born October 18, 1902. Died at the age of 8 of scarlet fever. Buried at British Hollow.

b. Kenneth Coons, born August 8, 1905. Attended the University of Wisconsin. Married Arline Proctor of Sioux City, Iowa, September 4, 1926. Their daughter, Carolyn, born May 31, 1927. The family resides in Sioux



City, where Kenneth is a highly successful automobile salesman.

c. Henry Bradbury Coons, born August 24, 1906. Educated at Platteville Mining School, and Missouri School of Mines. Married Harriet Edmunds of Charleston, West Virginia, January 15, 1938. A son, Henry Bradbury III, was born within the past few months. The family resides in Charleston, where Bradbury is responsibly employed by American Carbide and Chemical Corporation.

## 4.

## Hyman Eugene Coons.

Gene Coons, youngest child of Henry B. and Clara Phebe, was born November 3, 1872. He was a happy youth, "usually whistling or singing" (Clara Phebe to John S. letter January 27, 1877). Unlike his brother Henry, Gene was a tall, thin boy. Like most youngest children "Gene is a spoiled child", his mother wrote in 1879 to John.

Nor was he always discreet. At the age of nine he "got into trouble by repeating that F..... was tight". (Clara Phebe to Sallie, letter February 3, 1881).

That Gene was inclined to mischief is evidenced by his hurrahs for Hayes while his father wept for Tilden. (Sallie to John, letter, November 13, 1876).

Eugene Coons is an accomplished artisan and mechanic. His handiwork decorates his home and that of his daughter. He has invented several mechanical devices, some of which are patented.

Early he engaged in the hardware business in Potosi, later forming a partnership with his brother-in-law, T. H. Runkel.

On September 11, 1900, at Potosi, Wis., Gene was married





to Mary Ann Fure, born February 25, 1877. Her geniality and hospitality, coupled with her husband's droll humor, make their home pleasant to visit. For the last several years, they have lived in Dubuque.

One child, Mary Kathryn, was born to them—March 25, 1904. She was educated in a Dubuque seminary and at Whitewater Normal School. Before marriage, she was a teacher in Cudahy, Wisconsin. On June 11, 1928, she married Louis J. Huebler of Cudahy, an accountant. Their children, all born in Cudahy, where the family resides are:

Eugene John, born June 12, 1929.

Karl Joseph, born July 3, 1932.

Richard L., born August 21, 1936.



## CHAPTER V.

## SAMUEL BERRY COONS AND HIS DESCENDANTS.

The sixth child of John R. Coons and his wife, Sarah Bradbury was born March 19, 1831 in St. Louis, Missouri. He was christened Samuel Berry, but to his family was always called Sam. At the time of his birth, his parents resided in Gratiot's Grove; but for the birth and to execute some commissions in gilding, the mother went to her parent's home in St. Louis.

The education of Sam began at the age of 7 in the first school, erected of logs, in Snake Hollow in 1838. Brother Henry and two cousins were schoolmates.

The activities of the youth were directed to mining, prospecting, and mining machinery.

On October 18, 1860 he was married to Georgiana Rack-erby of Dubuque, Iowa. In such marriage Samuel followed the example of his father and brother in winning a remarkable woman. She was the daughter of John Hancock Rackerby and Georgiana Dudley, daughter of Capt. Robert Dudley\* of the War of 1812. The bride of Sam was well educated and for many years after raising her family taught school in Pierce City, Joplin and Carl Junction, Missouri. She was adept with the pen and facile with her words, writing many verses. The following, on the subject of teaching, has been selected as particularly noteworthy:

“I tried by little deeds of love  
And admonitions clear  
To lead thee to green pastures  
By waters pure and clear.  
And if I have by word or deed  
Estranged one heart from Heaven,  
Oh! may I, Heavenly Father,  
In mercy be forgiven.”

---

\* A scion of the famous Dudley family of England.





Samuel Coons and his wife remained in Wisconsin until 1873, when they moved to Orongo, Missouri, where Mr. Coons engaged in mining for one year. From 1874 until 1882 the family lived in Lincoln County, Kansas. After a year's residence in Rogers, Ark., the family moved to the flourishing mining town of Lehigh, Mo., finally locating in Carl Junction.

Three children were born to Samuel and Georgiana:

1. William Henry, *infra*.
2. Susie May, *infra*.
3. James B. "Beck," *infra*.

Samuel Coons died August 21, 1911, at the age of 80. He was buried with Masonic honors at Carl Junction. Samuel Coons was an unobtrusive man, quite reticent except in private conversation. He was well versed in science and the arts and a great reader.

His wife, Georgiana, survived him ten years, dying in Carl Junction, March 4, 1921, at the age of 82. She was a charter member of the Eastern Star in Carl Junction.

## 1.

### William Henry Coons.

William Henry, son of Samuel Berry Coons, was born in 1861 in Wisconsin. He died March 10, 1908, in Joplin, Mo., of pneumonia. He earned his livelihood as an engineer on the Frisco Railroad. He was a member of the Masonic organization and of the Baptist Church. His wife ..... survived until July 4, 1938.

Four children were born to William Henry and his wife.

a. Ethel, married to Travis Carpenter, and now living in Independence, Mo. She has one son.

b. William, married and in the grocery business in Wichita, Kansas. He has a son and grandson.



c. Georgiana, married to ..... Lane, residing in Wichita, Kansas.

d. Susie May, married to ..... Braithwait, residing in Wichita, Kansas.

## 2.

### Susie May Coons Isherwood.

The subject of this sketch, called by the Wisconsin Coons, Aunt Susie, was born February 21, 1865, in Potosi, Wis. She was married in Carl Junction, Mo., to Hortensius L. Isherwood on June 17, 1888. The husband was a graduate of Cornell College, Mt. Vernon, Iowa, and of Rush Medical College, 1878. The activities of Dr. Isherwood were many. He went to Missouri to practice his profession of physician and surgeon in 1880. He also engaged in mining and farming, and conducted a drug store.

He was elected on the Democratic ticket to the Thirty-seventh General Assembly of Missouri, where he served ably and well. Dr. Isherwood was a Mason.

Susie May was educated at Missouri Normal Institute. Throughout her life she was interested and active in community affairs. One of her chief interests was the Sorosis Club, a social and educational organization. She was a member of the Eastern Star, the White Shrine, and the Baptist Church.

To Susie May Coons and her husband were born three children.

a. Hortensius, died at the age of 23, July 16, 1916, as a result of an accident in a baseball game. He was then a student at Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan, Kansas.

b. Niena, formerly a teacher in Joplin High School. Now the wife of H. A. Henley, and residing at Columbia,





Missouri, where her husband is a teacher. She has four sons and one daughter.

c. Eber Dudley, married to Christine ..... and residing in Carl Junction, where he conducts a drug store.

Susie May died September 16, 1936. She is buried in the family lot in Carl Junction. Her husband predeceased her, dying in 1924 as a result of injuries in an automobile accident. In her widowhood, Susie May carried on her activities and interests, frequently entertaining friends and relatives.

### 3.

#### James B. Coons.

James B., commonly called "Beck," is the youngest son of Samuel Berry Coons. He was educated at Fort Scott Commercial College. On July 18, 1899, he was married to Cora A. Smith at Neosho, Missouri, in the Methodist parsonage. He now resides in Carl Junction, where he carries on a plumbing business in addition to being a mail carrier.

One daughter, Norma Dee, was born to "Beck" and his wife. She grew to beautiful young womanhood, was graduated from high school and college, and at once assumed a leadership among the women of her community, Neosho. She was most active in the D. A. R., in church work, and in clubs. She was married to Roger Reynolds. One daughter, Anna Dee, was born to this marriage.

Death in 1938 cut short her promising and useful life; but in her brief years she gave the world so much friendship and cheerful help that her record is written high in the Book of Judgment.



CHAPTER VI.

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## ELIZA COONS AND HER DESCENDANTS.

Eliza Coons was born January 16, 1836, either at the present site of Dubuque or at old Belmont, either place being then in the Territory of Michigan, but soon to become part of the Territory of Wisconsin (July 4, 1836). The probabilities are that Eliza was born at Catfish Creek (Dubuque), and that her parents did not move to Belmont until shortly before the seat of government of Territorial Wisconsin was established there.

When Eliza was 15 her mother died; her father, a year later. The young girl probably kept house for her brothers, Henry and Sam, at least for a while. Tradition of her relates that she was talented and beautiful and abounded with vitality. No daughter of Sarah Bradbury could be otherwise, nor could fail to transmit her characteristics to her daughter.

Eliza married William Gibson in 1857 or 1858. For a number of years the family resided in Grant County, Wisconsin, where their daughter, Eva, was born in 1859.

Eva, the oldest surviving descendant of John R. Coons and Sarah Bradbury, married in Potosi, Wisconsin, January 16, 1879 to Theodore A. (Thode) Calloley. Shortly after their marriage they moved to Colorado where they have since dwelt. Eliza and her daughter were dear to Eliza's brother's (Henry B's) wife, Clara Phebe. The latter mentioned them frequently in her correspondence. On June 12, 1879, she wrote to her son in Kentucky that Thode and Eva expect to start in a few days for Central City, Colorado; "but Eva may not be able to go now because her mother is in poor health. Everyone that can get away is leaving our poor old town (Potosi)".





Eventually Eliza and her husband moved to Colorado where the husband engaged in farming. There they both lived to an old age under the watchful eye of their daughter, and passed away to peace.

#### EVA COONS CALLOLEY.

As Sarah, her grandmother, pioneered in Wisconsin, so did Eva in Colorado. When she and her husband first moved to Arapahoe County, only seven houses could be seen from their door. For 47 years they have lived at 3020 South Lincoln Avenue, Englewood.

By dint of abundant energy and good health Uncle Thode and Aunt Eva raised and educated six children, adding rooms to their home as necessity arose.

The children are:

- a. Myrtle, m. Geo. Finn, one daughter, Ruth. Residence, Denver.
- b. Ethel, m. J. J. Booth, two daughters, Eva and Shirley. Residence, Englewood, Colorado.
- c. Edward M., m. Lula Sinclair, one son, John, who is married and has one son, the great grandchild of Eva, and the great, great, great, grandchild of John and Sarah. Residence, Englewood.
- d. Warren, m. Dorothy Rosler. Residence, Los Angeles.
- e. Ruth, m. Wm. A. Tremmel, son W. T. and daughter, Ruth. Residence, Englewood.
- f. Eugene G., unmarried, residing with his parents.

On January 16, 1939, Uncle Thode and Aunt Eva celebrated their sixtieth wedding anniversary. The husband 84, and at work each day in Denver! The mother, 80, and still doing all her own housework! Six children, six grandchildren, and one great grandchild! A house, immaculate!



A yard filled with flowers and soft with grass! A garden a professional would display with pride!

The Coons family crest of a lion in a field of azure, originated in the German Palatinate, transplanted to Virginia, thence to Kentucky and to Wisconsin, is not tarnished in Colorado. May some one of a future generation carry the crest to another frontier, geographic or economic; and may another record such new pioneering.

#### GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY.

##### *First Generation.*

John R. Coons (descendant of Jacob, who came to Virginia in 1714 from Germany, through Joseph and Henry) 1800-1852

m.

Sarah Bradbury (dau. of John Bradbury) 1800-1851

i John B.	1822-....., died unmarried
ii Unnamed sister	1822-....., died unmarried
iii John Wm.	1824-....., died unmarried
iv Elizabeth	1826-....., died unmarried
v Henry B.	1829-1908, (21)*
vi Samuel B.	1831-1911, (22)
vii Sarah	1833-....., died unmarried
viii Marie Louisa	1834-....., died unmarried
ix Unnamed brother	1834-....., died unmarried
x Eliza	1836- (23)

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\* Numbers placed in parenthesis after a name indicate the generation and subsequent entry number of that individual. Thus (21) means that Henry B. Coons will be found entered in Second Generation, No. 21. And (32) after the name of James Henry Coons indicates his name will be found as No. 32 under Third Generation. To trace descendants of an individual go from the number in parenthesis after his name to the same number preceding his name in the subsequent generation. To trace ancestry of an individual take the number preceding the name of the parent of that individual and in the preceding generation find the same number in parenthesis.





*Second Generation.*

21. Henry B., 1829-1908, m. Clara Phebe White, 1834-1909

- |                 |                           |
|-----------------|---------------------------|
| i John S.       | 1860-1880, died unmarried |
| ii Sallie       | 1861-1933, (31)           |
| iii James Henry | 1864-....., (32)          |
| iv William      | died young, unmarried     |
| v Hyman Eugene  | 1872-....., (33)          |

22. Samuel Berry, 1831-1911, m. Georgiana Rackerby  
..... 1921

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| i William Henry | 1861-1908, (34)  |
| ii Susie May    | 1865-1936, (35)  |
| iii James B.    | .....-..... (36) |

23. Eliza, 1936 ....., m. Wm. Gibson .....

- |       |                  |
|-------|------------------|
| i Eva | 1859-....., (37) |
|-------|------------------|

*Third Generation.*

31. Sallie, 1861-1933 m. Theodore H. Runkel 1864-1919

- |                   |                                       |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| i Percy B.        | 1891-1936, (41)                       |
| ii Clara Margaret | 1899-..... m. M. K. Hobbs, 1898-..... |

32. James Henry, 1864 ....., m. Mae Edwards .....

- |              |                      |
|--------------|----------------------|
| i Donald     | 1902-1910, unmarried |
| ii Kenneth   | 1905-....., (42)     |
| iii Henry B. | 1906-....., (43)     |

33. Hyman Eugene, 1872 ..... m. Mary Ann Fure, 1877

- |                |                  |
|----------------|------------------|
| i Mary Kathryn | 1904-....., (44) |
|----------------|------------------|

34. William Henry, 1861-1908, m .....  
.....-1938.

- |                     |                          |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| i Ethel .....       | (45)                     |
| ii William .....    | (46)                     |
| iii Georgiana ..... | m. .... Lane, .....      |
| iv Susie May .....  | m. .... Braithwait ..... |

35. Susie May, 1865-1936 m. Hortensius L. Isherwood  
....., 1924

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| i Niena .....         | (47)                |
| ii Hortensius .....   | 1926 died unmarried |
| iii Ever Dudley ..... | m. Christine .....  |

36. James B. .... m. Cora A. Smith .....

- |             |      |
|-------------|------|
| i Norma Dee | (48) |
|-------------|------|



37. Eva, 1859 .....m. Theodore A. Calloley .....  
     i Myrtle ..... (49)  
     ii Ethel ..... (41-1)  
     iii Edward M. .... (41-2)  
     iv Ruth ..... (41-3)  
     v Warren .....m. Dorothy Rosler  
     vi Eugene G. .... unmarried

*Fourth and Fifth Generations.*

41. Percy B. 1891-1936, m. Vera Scheppele, 1899.....  
     i Miriam Margaret, 1930-.....
42. Kenneth, 1905 ....., m. Arline Proctor .....  
     i Carolyn, 1927-.....
43. Henry B. 1906-..... m. Harriet Edmunds .....  
     i Henry B. III, 1938-.....
44. Mary Kathryn, 1904 ....., m. Louis Huebler, .....  
     .....  
         i Eugene John     1929-.....  
         ii Karl Joseph    1932-.....  
         iii Richard       1936-.....
45. Ethel ..... m. Travis Carpenter .....  
     i one son.
46. William ..... m. ....,  
     .....  
     i one son, and a grandson (Sixth Generation).
47. Niena, ..... m. H. A. Henley .....  
     i-v Four sons and one daughter.
48. Norma Dee ..... 1938, m. Roger Reynolds  
     i Anna Dee .....-
49. Myrtle ..... m. Geo. Finn, .....  
     i Ruth .....-
- 41-1. Ethel, ..... m. J. J. Booth, .....  
     i Eva .....-  
     ii Shirley .....-
- 41-2. Edward M., ..... m. Lulu Sinclair, .....  
     .....  
     i John, .....-....., who is married and has one son (Sixth Gen-  
         eration).





- 41-3. Ruth ....., m. Wm. A. Tremmel, .....  
     i William .....  
     ii Ruth .....

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